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ABSTRACT

This brochure provides individuals with cerebral palsy or other physical disabilities with 24 specific tips for getting ready for the day and 14 tips for getting out of the house. Tips address organizing for the day, getting out of bed, getting out of the bathtub, dressing procedures and aids, obtaining easy-to-use clothes, tying shoelaces, organizing the car, washing the car, and managing a wheelchair. A variety of commercially available aids are illustrated, including elastic shoelaces, magnifying tweezers, long-handled bath sponges, a folding dressing stick, and a doorknob alarm. (DB)

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EASE YOUR LIVING, #1

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EASE YOUR LIVING

Why do some people seem to move effortlessly through the day-to-day hassles of life--even when we know they are coping with significant physical or sensory limitations?

Probably because each is his own best teacher. Consciously or unconsciously, we may learn to use ordinary items in an extraordinary way. One of PIAM's friends of long standing, Nancy Anderson, has for years offered ingenious tips for accomplishing tasks particularly challenging to her because of cerebral palsy. We thank her for her inspiration and also for many of these tips, tips which came out under her byline "More than One Way", published by the Lansing Center of Handicapper Affairs, or in "Side by Side", published by the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Lansing.

Our Guest Editor in this series is Patricia Sweet, a part-time volunteer at the PAM Assistance Centre. Pat reviewed a number of other resources for ideas, among them **Mary Ellen's Best of Helpful Hints,** by Mary Ellen Pinkham and Pearl Higgins (Warner, 1979); **Household Hints and Handy Tips** (Reader's Digest); and "Making Life Easier", by Shelley Peterman Schwartz in **The Independence** (Carol-Jo, Inc., #8,#11,1991).

In this, our first "Ease Your Living," we address getting ready for the day and getting out of the house. Although we have compiled tips from and for handicappers, they just might give the rest of our friends some good ideas.

Editor's Note: Our next 'Ease Your Living' will lead you through the kitchen, the laundry, and the rest of the house. Perhaps you have a favorite tip to share with our readers. We'd love to hear from you.

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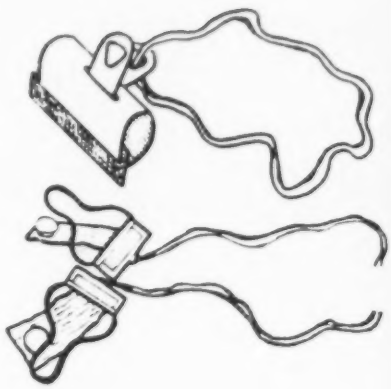
READY FOR THE DAY

Talking Alarm Clock

1. Organize your day. Do routine work at your "low time" and top priority, work when you are wide awake and functioning well.

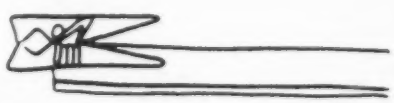
2. Easier to get dressed on the bed? Choose your clothes for the next day and put them on a chair next to your bed.

3. Can't get out of the bed in the morning? Tie a piece of rope to the leg of the bed, tie knots at intervals so that you can get a good grip. Safety pin the other end to the sheet at night, then pull yourself up by the knots in the morning.



4. Run very warm water over a wash cloth, wring out and apply to your face before a facial or to unclog sinuses. This may have to be repeated several times to get results but is safer than standing over a steaming teakettle.

5. Turn onto your hands and knees and push up slowly in order to get out of the bathtub.

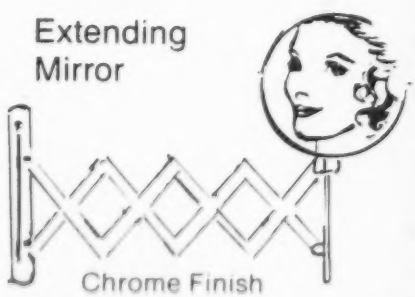


Clothes can be pulled on with the aid of clips, supporter fasteners, or clothes pins attached to a cord or stick.

6. Hair conditioner: combine 3/4 cup olive oil, 1/2 cup honey and the juice of 1 lemon and set aside. Rinse hair and brush or comb to distribute evenly. Cover with a plastic bag or shower cap for 1/2 hour. Shampoo and rinse thoroughly. Store excess in refrigerator for use next day.

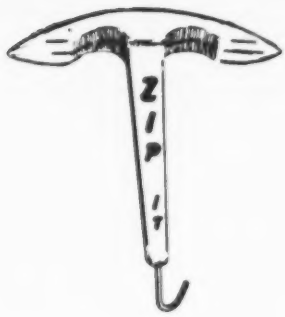
7. If your home is not designed for a wheelchair, hang a second mirror at your eye level in the bathroom. You may also purchase a mirror that stands alone and swivels so it can be adjusted for you to see.

Extending Mirror



8. As a handicapper, you may request that your prescriptions and medications be put into non-child-proof containers.

Zip-it



9. Zippers--attach a paper clip to the pull, and wrap with yarn and fasten to pull.

10. Do your bra straps slide off your shoulders? Try sewing thin elastic between them in the back.

11. Blow dry a laundered pair of panty hose when in a hurry. Hang them on a hanger with the hair dryer directed at them.

12. Ladies! It's easy to inadvertently tuck your shirt or blouse into your underwear, and unless you glance into a full-length mirror you may never know that the underwear is exposed. Undies have a way of staying up while slacks tend to slide down a bit when bending. The solution: wear bikini briefs.

13. Rub the teeth of a zipper with a candle or bar soap to allow the pull to slide easier.

14. Static electricity in slacks or skirts--rub hand cream on your legs and over the nylons. The garments will no longer cling.

15. Make a button hook out of a wire clothes hanger. Take one end and squeeze together so that it will go through a button hole, slip over the button and pull the button through the hole. You could put a plain hook on the other end to use on zippers.

16. Use 6 -10 pound test monofilament fishline to sew on buttons. You don't have to rethread the needle.

17. Purchase tops without buttons if they are a problem for you. Should the neck opening be too low, put a turtleneck or harmonizing scarf underneath.

18. Try tube socks if you have trouble putting on or taking off regular socks.

19. Once you locate hard-to-find shoes with velcro closures, or jeans, corduroys or skirts with elasticized waist-bands, strongly consider purchasing more than one. You may never find that item again.

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20. To help shoelaces stay tied, dampen them before tying. Caution: soggy shoelaces (especially knotted ones) are very difficult to untie.

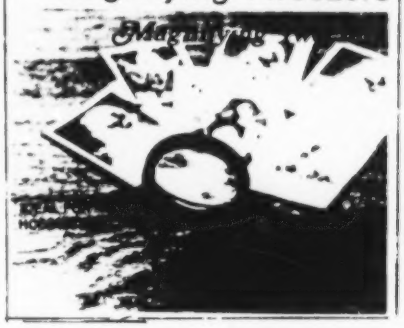
21. Another way to keep laces tightened, after the shoe is laced, crisscross the laces again and insert in the normal fashion.

22. Try wearing a low boot instead of tie shoes.

23. Waterproof your shoes with floor wax or silicone after polishing.

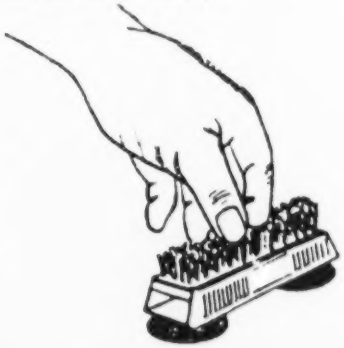
24. Your favorite chain in a knot? Dust it with talcum powder, and then work out the knot. If the knot is really stubborn, place a drop of baby oil on wax paper, lay the knot in the oil and work the chain with two common pins. Clean the chain in ammonia or sudsy water and rinse.

Magnifying Tweezers

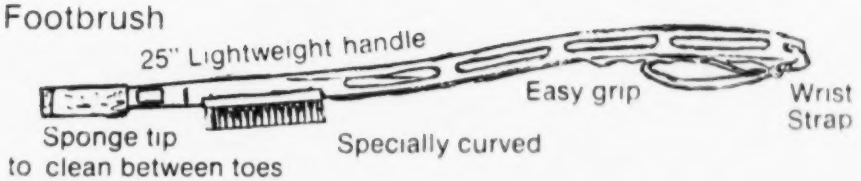


Elastic Shoelaces

Hand/Nail Brush

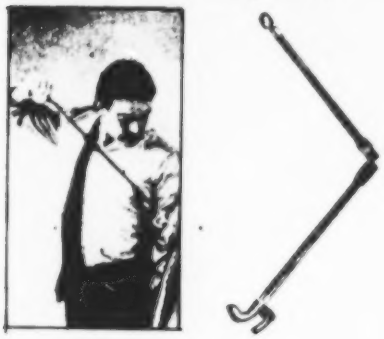


Footbrush



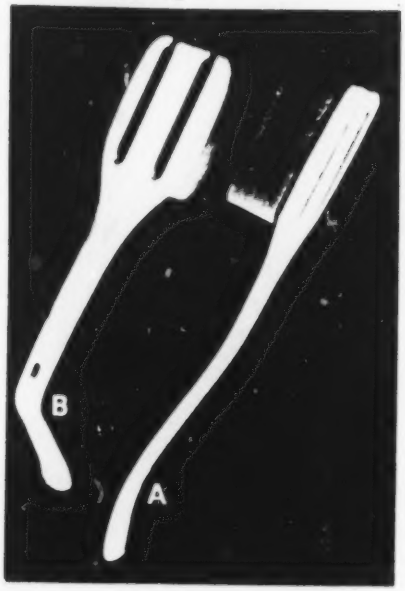
Bio-Pik™

Folding Dressing Stick



Foam Tubing

Long-handled
Bath Sponges



No Rinse™

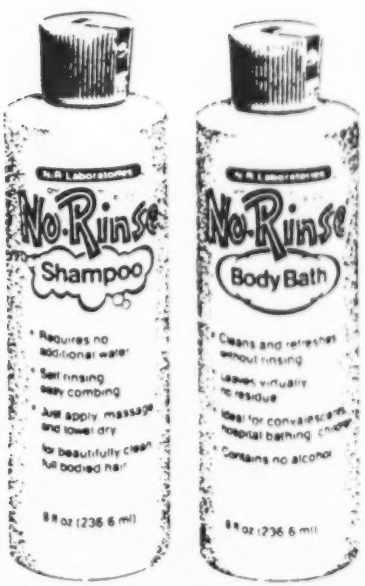


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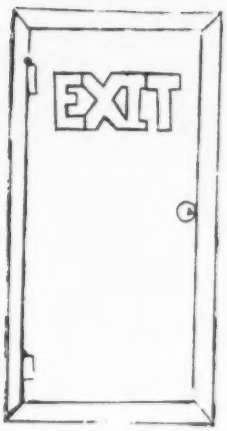
Photo Credits

Those commercially available aids to independence which you see pictured here may be available to you locally. If not, there are various mail order sources. Prices vary. Our thanks to Access with Ease, Inc. for the photos we have included here. (P.O. Box 1150, Chino Valley, AZ 86323).

GETTING OUT OF THE HOUSE



1. When traveling by car, hang a shoe bag on the hook and store tissues, toys, maps, drinking cups etc. in the pockets. This will also block out the sun for small ones in the back seat.

2. Washing your car--use a bucket of water with 1 cup kerosene followed by a good wiping with soft cloths. The car does not need to be wet first nor rinsed afterwards. Waxing is not needed with this method.

3. Carry a bag of kitty litter in the trunk of your car just in case you get stuck in ice or snow. If the kitty litter is in an empty bleach bottle someone can pour it under the tires more easily.

4. If you do get stuck and don't have the kitty litter or a shovel, have someone place the rubber floor mats in front of the rear wheels.

5. To prevent the windshield from freezing when the car is parked outside in the winter, place your rubber floor mats over the windshield and secure with the wipers.

6. For rainy weather, purchase an inexpensive plastic poncho with a hood to cover you and your wheelchair or crutches/cane.

7. To prevent rust forming on the body moldings of your auto, apply a thin layer of clear silicone rubber sealant along the moldings.

8. Carry an old towel with you to wipe snow and slush off wheelchair tires before entering a friend's house or your own.

9. If smooth new soles make it difficult to walk without slipping, put old fashioned adhesive tape on them.

10. Ladies, ever wonder what to do with your purse while motivating (pushing) your wheelchair? Purchase a purse with a long, sturdy shoulder strap. Loop the strap around one of your chair's handlebars and let the purse rest by your side or on your lap. For added safety against purse snatchers, hang a bag on the handlebars **over** the purse strap.

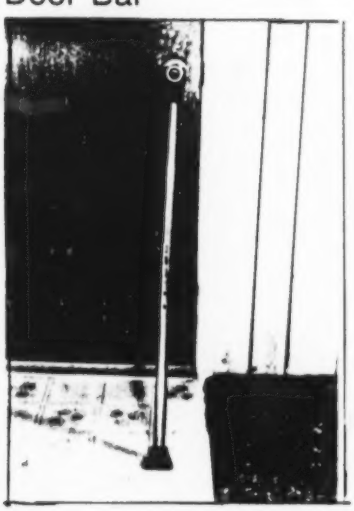
11. Strapping a trendy fanny pack around your waist or wheelchair arm allows freedom of movement and works well when engaging in casual recreational and sport activities.

12. Carry a spare coin purse with the exact change for bus fare. Regularly replenish the money.

13. As a chair user, to carry dishes to and from the table, put a towel on your lap or squeeze a plastic dishpan between the armrests. Remove the dishes separately, or put the whole dishpan in the sink if you have enough strength.

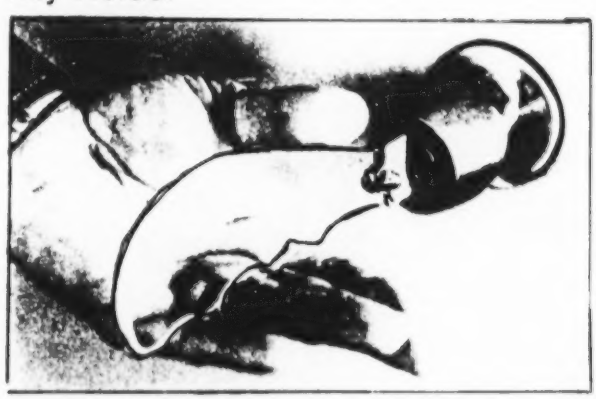
14. If you are in a wheelchair, make a tray of heavy water-proof plastic-coated fabric fastened to a plastic head band. This fits around the waist without tying, and the tray should be large enough to cover the entire lap. Then make tucks at the corners so it turns up and items don't roll off.

Door Bar



Doorknob Alarm

Key Holder



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EATING OUT

1. Pick up an abundance of napkins when attending a fast food restaurant. Store the unused ones in a pocket or purse for use later.

2. When you are eating out and spill food on your clothes, sponge off with a clean white cloth dipped in club soda.

3. When ordering an ice cream cone, request that it be put into a cup so it won't leak or fall off the cone.

4. If you have restricted arm movement, rest a dinner plate on a wicker bread basket about 5 inches high and 8 inches in diameter. (Be cautious. The waitress may think your basket belongs to the restaurant!)

5. Cyclists' water bottles are great for long car/bus trips and for a middle-of-the night thirst. Fill it with water and place it by your bed. Pre-fill the bottle with a favorite beverage and refrigerate for later use. Pre-fill with milk and squirt it on pre-poured cereal, stored in a covered plastic bowl.

6. Put straws in a plastic bag and carry them where ever you go.

7. To open cans, place the handle of a spoon under tab and press down on the bowl of the spoon.

8. Reach for the paper towel to dry hands before washing your hands and dribbling water on the floor.

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